DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 463 090 PS 030 242

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TITLE Hand-in-Hand We're Changing the Future of Education: Introducing the Intergenerational Approach and Promoting the Need for Trained Professionals.

PUB DATE 2001-11-01

NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Educators of Young Children Conference (Anaheim, CA, October 31-November 3, 2001).

PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Adult Day Care; *Caregiver Training; *Caregivers; *Child Caregivers; Day Care; *Developmentally Appropriate Practices; Early Childhood Education; Educational Practices; Gerontology; *Intergenerational Programs; Mixed Age Grouping; Older Adults; *Professional Development; Standards; Young Children

ABSTRACT

As the demand for quality intergenerational care increases, it is imperative that intergenerational care providers exhibit developmentally appropriate practice across the lifespan. This paper defines intergenerational programming and discusses the emergence of intergenerational studies as integrating the fields of early childhood education and gerontology. The paper details the need for cross-training for practitioners involved in existing intergenerational programs and describes the development of guidelines and standards for intergenerational specialist practice. Six standards are detailed along with sample key indicators. The following options for providing cross-training are explained: (1) academic preparation related to curriculum planning and implementation, program evaluation, family systems, theory, cultural differences, and social policy; (2) experiential opportunities such as service-learning and internships; and (3) on-the-job training utilizing the guidelines and standards. The paper concludes by noting that the success of an intergenerational specialist depends on the quality of education and training he or she receives. Education, experience, and training based on the guidelines and standards for intergenerational practice will prepare practitioners to develop a program philosophy, thereby providing a strong foundation upon which an effective, sustainable intergenerational program may be built. (Contains 14 references.) (KB)

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ED 463 090

Hand-in-Hand We're Changing the Future of Education:

Introducing the Intergenerational Approach and Promoting the Need for Trained Professionals

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November 1, 2001
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PS 030242

Key Terminology:
Intergenerational, Cross-Training,
Service-Learning, Intergenerational Specialists,
Intergenerationally-Enriched Environment

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Successful Intergenerational Programming: Standards & the Importance of Cross-Trained Staffs

Introduction:

Imagine yourself involved in an intergenerational setting with six four-year-old children and ten senior adults. Suddenly, one of the children throws a crayon and the propelled object hits another child in the head. Without hesitation, an 87 year-old participant turns to the child and says, "If you do that again, I'll beat your butt!" As an intergenerational care provider, what can you do about this comment? Are you adequately prepared to respond? Do you have the essential education, experience, or cross-training necessary to resolve the issue?

Your response represents your philosophy, or set of principles, for working with young children and senior adults. If you are a student in training, you may not have given much thought to a particular philosophy, but as you become more involved in intergenerational situations, you will form one. If you are already working in an age-integrated setting, you may have a formal philosophy that you apply faithfully and consistently. Perhaps it works sometimes and not others; in turn leaving you feeling frustrated. We speculate that because you are reading this article, you are exploring alternative ways to interact with the young people and senior adults, who are or will be in your care.

Rationale:

Demographics indicate that the demand for child and senior adult care is rapidly increasing. More and more children require daily supervision while their parents work,

and more adults are living to advanced ages, therefore, both are in need of care. The need for quality day care workers is dramatically increasing. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics currently reports a decline of day care workers as a result of 50-54% annual turnover rate and fewer qualified workers entering the field. A need also exits for professionals to care for senior adults who are the fastest growing segment of our population (Traxel, 1993). The quality of life for both age groups can be enhanced through interrelated and stimulating intergenerational activities, provided by qualified staff that know and understand developmentally appropriate practice across the lifespan (Rosebrook & Murray, 1999).

As the demand for intergenerational care accelerates, the demand for quality care also increases. In response to this need education, experience, and training are required. It is imperative for intergenerational care providers to comprehend the importance of communication and collaboration skills, to understand integrated subject matter and knowledge from related disciplines, to utilize appropriate evaluation techniques, and be reflective, caring professionals.

Intergenerational care providers must posses the knowledge and understand the theory that guides them as they attempt to resolve situations similar to the one described at the beginning of this article.

Intergenerational Programming:

Intergenerational programming is defined as the purposeful bringing together of generations in ongoing mutually beneficial planned activities to achieve specified program goals (Generations United, 2000). Intergenerationally-enriched environments are stimulating, age-integrated settings that provide care and ongoing interactions for

children and senior adults (Rosebrook, 2001). Combined programs and enriched environments have the capacity to facilitate mutually beneficial exchange by actively bringing together younger and older persons. Yet, according to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), "while there are thousands of sites across the nation already offering intergenerational activities, employees of these facilities often lack adequate cross-training to work simultaneously with younger people and senior adults" (1996). Intergenerational programs may encourage and facilitate interdependency and generational understanding, but education and training in intergenerational issues help us gain a broader perspective of our common needs and goals (Scannel & Roberts, 1995).

Intergenerational Studies is an emerging discipline that integrates relevant knowledge from multiple domains, provides a framework for professional skill development, and suggests appropriate dispositions for individuals to work simultaneously with younger age groups and senior adults (Larkin & Rosebrook, In Press). Intergenerational Studies and cross-training have evolved as a natural growth of intergenerational programming (Newman, 2000). Not only does Intergenerational Studies combine a variety of ages, it marries academics to human services, and blends two distinct fields of study – Early Childhood and Gerontology, creating unexplored possibilities for an emerging field of study.

The philosophy of this article is based on three distinct beliefs:

1. It is important to use Intergenerational Guidelines and Standards as a base for education as this field of study develops.
2. Experiential opportunities are of the utmost importance.
3. It is necessary to provide cross-training for practitioners involved in existing intergenerational programs.

Cross-Training:

In the context of this article, *intergenerational cross-training* refers to the transfer of knowledge across fields of study (i.e., Early Childhood Education to Gerontology) in order to assist individuals in becoming proficient to work in multi-age initiatives. Thoroughly educated and/or cross-trained staffs are essential ingredients for intergenerational program success.

Cross-training occurs in diverse ways and through a variety of models including: academic preparation, experiential opportunities, and on-the-job training. Quality cross-training ensures that the skills, knowledge, and dispositions needed to work and interact with individuals across the age spectrum, are transferred to individuals aspiring to become intergenerational staff and care providers. Individuals who are thoroughly cross-trained and prepared to work among diverse ages in age-integrated settings are referred to as *Intergenerational Specialists.*

Specialists need to recognize and appreciate defined guidelines and standards that outline the requisite knowledge, skills, and dispositions that become the basis for successful intergenerational programming (Larkin & Rosebrook, in press). According to Donna Butts, Executive Director of Generations United, "The intergenerational field of study is so new that there is no precedent for 'Best Practice', only 'Promising Practice', and we must identify guidelines and standards to unify the field" (2000). As this new field develops and research continues to expand the underlying knowledge base, it becomes increasingly important to establish guidelines for quality intergenerational practice (Larkin & Rosebrook, in press).

With this in mind, Elizabeth Larkin, Ed.D. and Vicki Rosebrook, Ph.D. conceptualized and developed the Guidelines & Standards for Intergenerational Practice early in 2001. Dr. Larkin previously developed an Intergenerational Graduate degree at Wheelock College, Boston, Massachusetts and Dr. Rosebrook developed Intergenerational Studies Associate and Master degree and certificate programs at The University of Findlay in northwest Ohio. Having developed academic programs, both understood that guidelines and standards were necessary in order to unify this fragmented and fledging field. Larkin and Rosebrook state, "Once the same competencies and standards are implemented across the range of program models, consistent guidelines for effective intergenerational work and expertise then emerge" (in press). Academic preparation, experiential opportunities, and on-the-job training focused on the Guidelines & Standards for Intergenerational Practice must be considered as potential options for providing intergenerational cross-training.

Elizabeth Larkin and Vicki Rosebrook, also agree with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) that, "Standards should be framed as desired outcomes rather than processes for learning. Focusing on the outcomes of preparation recognizes and values that there are multiple routes to achieving the goals" (NAEYC, 1996). The Guidelines & Standards for Intergenerational Practice do not promote any single path to acquiring the knowledge, skills and dispositions specific to this specialization, or to obtaining a particular certificate or degree. Rather, they call for all Intergenerational Specialists to demonstrate or provide evidence of having met each broad standard (goal), regardless of the specific type of employment setting or job description they expect to pursue or are presently involved in. Sample indicators

(objectives) are provided, following the model used by the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) in their Standards for Teacher Educators (2000), but these are by no means an exhaustive list of possibilities for demonstrating proficiency, and the sources of evidence can range from course assignments to research projects, videotape analyses, grant proposals, conference workshops, reflective writing about practical experiences, and the like.

GUIDELINES & STANDARDS
FOR
INTERGENERATIONAL PRACTICE

Standards of practice for Intergenerational Specialists represent the competencies for which professionals that work with both young people and older adults are to be held accountable. The knowledge base must be constantly reviewed and updated as the field grows increasingly informed and can define more specific indicators that characterize expertise in this specialized area of professional practice. The evidence that is used to demonstrate proficiency must be flexible, yet convincing so that the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the Intergenerational Specialist are clearly articulated according to key indicators in each general category.

Standard I:
The Intergenerational Specialist draws upon knowledge of human development across the life span to plan and implement effective programs that bring young people and older adults together for their mutual benefit.

Sample Key Indicators:

1.1 Identifies the ways in which young people and older adults have similar developmental needs, and plans programming to serve both populations simultaneously for their mutual benefit.
1.2 Uses an understanding of how people learn at different developmental stages to plan intergenerational activities using a multi-sensory and interactive approach that can accommodate different styles.
1.3 Plans intergenerational programming that stimulates the brain through appropriate physical exercise, social interactions, and cognitive challenges.
1.4 Recognizes the need for all age groups to feel included, cared about, and safe.
1.5 Understands the importance of such domains as friendship, play, self-esteem, autonomy, loss, and grief at various stages across the life course.
1.6 Recognizes signs of typical medical problems that might occur with younger and older populations, and can make appropriate referrals.

Standard II:
The Intergenerational Specialist recognizes the need for and employs effective communications to support the development of intergenerational relationships.

Sample Key Indicators:

2.1 Understands the developmental differences and capabilities of young people and older adults in terms of their social, linguistic, cultural, emotional, spiritual, and physical expressions.
2.2 Creates an environment that promotes intergenerational interaction and minimizes barriers caused by physical disabilities, or differences in cultural background and life experience.
2.3 Uses appropriate language to encourage informal and planned interactions among participants of different ages.
2.4 Communicates positive interest in every program participant regardless of age or level of engagement.
2.5 Acts in a compassionate, sensitive manner in response to the unique perspectives of all individuals including participants, colleagues, and participants' families.

Standard III:
The Intergenerational Specialist understands and demonstrates a commitment to collaboration and partnership.

Sample Key Indicators:

3.1 Recognizes the benefits of sharing expertise across institutional boundaries and professional training.
3.2 Advocates the benefits of intergenerational programs and educates colleagues about their value.
3.3 Develops joint missions, schedules, and budgets that support the respective organizational goals and reflect an equitable use of resources for each partner in any collaboration.
3.4 Organizes cross-training opportunities for staff to learn from each other a range of effective strategies for managing troubling behaviors among older and younger participants.
3.5 Embraces technological innovation to facilitate and manage inter-agency communication and collaboration.
3.6 Maintains high ethical standards and respectful, collegial relationships with other professionals in the field.

Standard IV:
The Intergenerational Specialist integrates subject matter knowledge from a variety of relevant fields including psychology, sociology, history, literature, and the arts to develop programs.

Sample Key Indicators:

4.1 Demonstrates knowledge of the historical, cultural, and social foundations of intergenerational programming, and which models have survived the test of time as successful.
4.2 Recognizes how the cultural experiences of each generation shape the values and perspectives of younger and older participants in the program differently, allowing for an exchange of viewpoints.
4.3 Applies relevant contest area knowledge from various academic disciplines in developing effective intergenerational activities.
4.4 Explores traditional and newly developed methodologies that help to address intergenerational problems at the community, societal, and global levels.
4.5 Conducts action research to inform the field of intergenerational studies.
4.6 Crafts goals for intergenerational programs that reflect an interdisciplinary perspective on what each generation has to contribute to others.
4.7 Uses developmentally appropriate materials and technologies to provide activities that promote successful intergenerational interactions.

Standard V.
The Intergenerational Specialist employs appropriate evaluation techniques adapted from the fields of education and social sciences to inform program development for diverse age groups and settings.

Sample Key Indicators:

5.1 Is familiar with and applies multiple strategies for assessing program outcomes.
5.2 Is aware of the community context in which programs function so that broad social policies and available resources are aligned with the intergenerational goals and outcomes.
5.3 Coordinates an exchange of information about data collection and analysis across partnering agencies that will contribute to mutual improvements.
5.4 Includes participants, their families, and staff in the planning and evaluation process.
5.5 Uses an interdisciplinary approach to interpreting current research and theory to inform intergenerational best practices.

Standard VI:
The Intergenerational Specialist is a reflective, caring professional whose purpose is to bring young people and older adults together for their mutual benefit.

Sample Key Indicators:

6.1 Facilitates matching young people and older adults who can be compatible and enjoy building a relationship based on shared interests, needs, or goals through an intergenerational program.
6.2 Models an effective interactive style with all age groups.
6.3 Engages regularly in self-reflection to continue growing as an intergenerational professional.
6.4 Invites external feedback from colleagues in the intergenerational field to promote critical thinking and problem solving.
6.5 Consciously mentors new professionals entering the field of intergenerational studies.
6.6 Promotes positive communication among diverse groups who participate in intergenerational work, and helps to interpret this field's importance for the general public.
6.7 Contributes to the profession by presenting at conferences, conducting research and disseminating findings, writing for publication, or networking with others locally, nationally and internationally.

These proposed Guidelines & Standards have been authored by Elizabeth Larkin, Ed.D., University of South Florida, and Vicki Rosebrook, Ph.D., The University of Findlay. Please direct all comments and revision suggestions to: Dr. Elizabeth Larkin, USF at Sarasota/Manatee, 5700 N. Tamiami Trail – PMC 101, Sarasota, FL 34243 or Dr. Vicki Rosebrook, The University of Findlay, 1000 N. Main St., Findlay, OH 45840.

Options for Providing Cross-Training:

Academic Preparation

The preparation of qualified Intergenerational Specialists includes opportunities to demonstrate knowledge of curriculum planning and implementation, program evaluation, family systems, theory, cultural difference, and social policy, as well as opportunities to participate in supervised practice in a variety of field research, service-learning, and

internship experiences. Intergenerational education and training is intellectually rigorous because it requires integrating information from different domains; it has a problem-solving orientation, and it is largely experiential in nature in order to connect theory and practice. Knowledge and skill attainment can be coordinated with the Guidelines & Standards in such a way that individuals are documenting their growing mastery necessary to intergenerational work.

Intergenerational courses of study must integrate information from a variety of disciplines, diverse literature, and focus on the value and effects of intergenerational programming on the participants, systems, and communities (Dellman-Jenkins, Lambert, Fruit, 1991). Combined academic and experiential education is necessary in order to adequately cross-train individuals to work simultaneously with an age-diverse population. The quality intergenerational courses of study reflect that, "the most effective curriculum-based intergenerational activities are not about aging, per se, but about people who happen to be different ages sharing interest and expertise" (AARP, 1996).

There is a wide functioning range for Intergenerational Specialists; therefore, a systematic progression of study that integrates the Guidelines & Standards for Intergenerational Practice creates individuals who are prepared to perform as technicians, practitioners, administrators, scholars, researchers, evaluators, and policy makers. Academic preparation that is based upon the Guidelines & Standards for Intergenerational Practice addresses the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that prepare individuals to work simultaneously with multi-aged persons, opening the doors for a variety of professional opportunities.

Experiential Opportunities:

Becoming a proficient Intergenerational Specialist requires not only academic study, but also practical experience (Larkin & Rosebrook, in press). The ultimate goal is to educate individuals for life, not simply for a single career. It is crucial to provide them the resources to make a difference in communities. Experiential learning (service-learning and internships) is an important part of this process. According to the Director of Experience Based Education at SUNY College in New York, Dr. Paul Roodin,

> "Service-learning combines community service and student involvement with academic study. It differs from both volunteerism and internships. Volunteerism is not designed to deliberately build educational outcomes; service-learning is not directly comparable to an internship, but both require significant time in the community and both are designed to enhance student learning." (2000, p.1)

Experiential requirements need to be consistent with intergenerational pedagogy, and be well planned and sequenced, so as to provide opportunities for individuals to integrate theory into practice. Field experience also offers individuals opportunities to study and practice in a variety of settings with diverse ages, to collaborate and network with many intergenerational professionals and to make potential job connections for future employment. When young people, senior adults, students, and Intergenerational Specialists come together, everyone is elevated as learning and sharing flows in many directions.

> "Through intergenerational experiential learning, students make connections between the world outside and the world of academy; they see

> what needs to be addressed and create solutions to alter the status quo; they develop the courage to take risks to produce change, and they develop the character, the skills, and the will to understand how, when and why to make a difference, they ask questions that are meaningful. In experiential settings, students are directly linked with their stakeholders; youth and older persons, agencies, staffs, and the community itself." (Roodin, 2000, p. 2)

Intergenerational Specialists develop expertise as they reflect and analyze program effectiveness.

On-the-Job Training:

All too often, however, individuals possessing such education and experience are put into positions of responsibility while they themselves are still testing their skills. There is no substitute for experience when it comes to learning how to be a leader. Yet, in the growing field of intergenerational programming, initiatives are emerging and individuals with little education and experience are being asked to provide quality intergenerational interactions and programs. This could potentially create situations in which care providers have no one to turn to with problems, are unable to find individuals to facilitate disagreement resolution, and worst of all, are involved in programs where there are no core philosophies.

It would be wonderful if everyone aspiring to be involved could be thoroughly cross-trained prior to engaging in intergenerational programming, however, the need for Intergenerational Specialists far exceeds the number of individuals trained, consequently, on-the-job training becomes crucial. While on-the-job training can be formal and/or

informal it is important to utilize the Guidelines & Standards for Intergenerational Practice in all training. Formal training consists of conferences, instructional sessions, workshops, and programs provided by qualified Intergenerational Specialists and consultants. When practicing on-site, Intergenerational Specialists model appropriate behaviors and provide guidance as they delegate tasks, which are considered informal training. The standards indicate how to apply appropriate intergenerational techniques as the foundation for on-the-job training.

It is true there are many unknowns and, until recently, few guidelines for educating individuals who work with such age-diverse groups, however, what unifies diversity is common knowledge. In existing intergenerational programs where learning occurs on-site, it is especially crucial to get everyone "on the same page". In order to emerge with a united common goal, staffs from cooperating child and adult care programs must be cross-trained, encouraged, and empowered. If this process is looked upon as a proverbial blank canvas, there is the opportunity to create something extraordinary from the many fragmented pieces. Those involved must be excited by the challenge: find trainers with combined professional experiences; employ supportive administrators; and retrain enthusiastic staff members who can bring the intergenerational dream to fruition (Reynolds, 2001).

Conclusion:

The success of all intergenerational programs depends on the amount of planning and preparation that goes into the developmental state (AARP, 1996). Likewise, the success of an *Intergenerational Specialist* depends on the quality of education and training they receive. In order to assure continued growth and sustainability for organized

child and adult interactions, intergenerational studies and programming must blend many components: young people and senior adults, child and adult care staffs, academics and human services, Early Childhood Education and Gerontology, pedagogy and experience, and oftentimes, facilities that originally provided segregated care and activities for youth and senior adults. While blending is often difficult, a qualified, cross-trained *Intergenerational Specialist* understands the importance of looking for commonalties among the individual components. Well-trained specialists realize it is the similar experiences in each of the unique professions that eventually bridge the gap that might otherwise divide them.

Competent and knowledgeable staffs are capable of developing and implementing effective and responsive lines of communication; planning quality interactions, and understanding the importance of integrating generations. Education, experience, and training based on the Guidelines & Standards for Intergenerational Practice prepare individuals to develop a program philosophy. Clearly articulated program philosophies, in turn, provide strong foundations upon which infrastructures can be built. This strong and solid base leads to sustainable intergenerational programs where young people and senior adults can truly reap the benefits.

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